



New Professional Development Regulations: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

www.nj.gov/education/profdev

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf>

Background and Resources

Q: How were New Jersey's Standards for Professional Learning developed, and where can I find them?

A: The professional learning standards and definition, set forth in *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.2* and *15.3*, are posted at www.nj.gov/education/profdev. New Jersey has adopted the revised standards for professional learning developed by a consortium convened by Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council). The revised standards outline the characteristics of effective professional learning and serve as indicators to guide the facilitation, implementation and evaluation of professional learning that leads to effective teaching practice and supportive leadership practice. These standards are to be used in conjunction with New Jersey's Definition of Professional Development, which focuses on teacher and school leader effectiveness in support of student success and incorporates professional learning strategies and activities, including job-embedded supports and collaborative work.

Q: How can my school/district get a copy of the New Jersey collaborative professional learning toolkit?

A: The *Collaborative Professional Learning in School and Beyond: A Tool Kit for New Jersey Educators* is a resource for supporting educators who are implementing job-embedded, collaborative professional learning in schools and districts. The toolkit contains surveys, articles, planning templates, and other tools for use by teachers, facilitators, administrators, coaches, and consultants who support collaborative professional learning in New Jersey. All teaching staff and administrators should have a personal copy of the toolkit. To obtain a link to download the toolkit, email TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us and include your name and the name of your district.

Planning Requirements

Q: Are teachers and supervisors required to create individual teacher Professional Development Plans as they have done in the past?

A: As in the past, each teacher must develop an individualized PDP in consultation with his/her supervisor; this is typically done at the end of each school year. For teachers new to a district, the PDP must be created within the first 30 days of their assignment.

Q: Are districts required to create new plans for individual teachers for 2013-14, even if they already created their plans at the end of the 2012-13 school year?

A: The 2013-14 school year will be a year of transition as educators begin implementing the requirements in *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15*. Therefore, the Department will not require districts to create new PDPs for individual teachers and education services staff if their plans have already been created for the 2013-14 school year. However, any newly hired educators in 2013-14 must develop PDPs within 30 instructional days of the beginning of their teaching assignments, as required in *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.4*. The plans are revised at a minimum annually, but they may be adjusted as necessary during the school year to support the teacher's progress.



Q: For the 2013-14 school year, should principals and supervisors create new individual Professional Development Plans (PDP) or will they continue to implement their current three-year individual Professional Growth Plans (PGP)?

A: New regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7*) governing professional development for principals and supervisors became effective in July, 2013. These regulations change professional development planning from a three-year to a one-year cycle. They also change the name of the plan from “Professional Growth Plan (PGP)” to “Professional Development Plan (PDP).” The PDP will be linked to the annual evaluation cycle for principals and supervisors. Because many principals and supervisors will have already created a multi-year plan, the Department will not require them to develop new PDPs for the 2013-14 school year. During this transition year, that decision is left at the discretion of the superintendent in collaboration with the principal/supervisor. However, a PDP must be created in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7* for any administrator who is a new hire in the district during the 2013-14 school year. New PDPs aligning with the requirements of *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7* must be created for the 2014-15 school year for all principals and supervisors.

In addition, there are some specific requirements in the new regulations that must be met by all principals and supervisors during the transition period, as follows:

- Principals and supervisors must provide evidence of their progress toward fulfillment of their plans during the school year which includes (a) a narrative detailing plan goals and progress toward these goals, and (b) documentation of professional growth activities (e.g., school and district collaborative teams, training, action research, study groups). (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7(d)*)
- Each principal and his or her CSA/supervisor must meet at mid-year to discuss the principal’s progress and determine if modifications are needed in the plan to assist him or her in fulfilling the plan goals. (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7(g)*)

Q: For the 2013-14 school year, should Chief School Administrators create new individual Professional Development Plans (PDP) or will they continue to implement their current three-to-five year individual Professional Growth Plans (PGP)?

New regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7*) governing professional development for Chief School Administrators (CSA) became effective in July, 2013. These regulations continue the three-to-five year (depending on contract length) professional development planning cycle but require an annual review of progress. They also change the name of the plan from “Professional Growth Plan (PGP)” to “Professional Development Plan (PDP).” The PDP review will be linked to the annual evaluation cycle for CSAs. Because many CSAs will have already created a multi-year plan, the Department will not require them to develop new PDPs for the 2013-14 school year. However, for any CSA who is a new hire in the district, a PDP must be created in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7*.

In addition, CSAs must provide evidence of their progress toward fulfillment of their plans during the 2013-14 school year which includes (a) a narrative detailing plan goals and progress toward these goals, and (b) documentation of professional growth activities (e.g., school and district collaborative teams, training, action research, study groups). (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7(d)*)

New PDPs aligning with the requirements of *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.7* must be created for the 2014-15 school year for all CSAs for the duration of their contract terms.

Q: Who reviews the Professional Development Plan for Chief School Administrators?

A: The local board of education will review the Professional Development Plan for CSAs.



Q: Do the professional development requirements for principals include all supervisors and administrators (such as director of curriculum)?

A: The professional development requirements for principals include “all active school leaders serving on a permanent or interim basis whose positions require possession of the chief school administrator, principal or supervisor endorsement in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9-12.” (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.1(b)) Hence, a director of curriculum, for example, holding a supervisor certification would fall under this provision.

Q: Are districts required to create new school and district plans for 2013-14, even if they already created their plans at the end of the 2012-13 school year?

A: The 2013-14 school year is a transition year as educators begin implementing the requirements in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15. Therefore, the Department will not require districts to create new 2013-14 school and district Professional Development Plans if they have already created them. However, plans are living documents that should be revisited and updated, as needed, to reflect the ongoing professional learning needs of teachers and administrators. Adjustments to plans need to occur as new information becomes available in the course of the school year, such as feedback on teacher observations (aggregated at the school level) and interim student assessment results.

Q: How many professional development hours are required for nurses in the first 3 years of employment?

A: In the first 3 years of employment, nurses must complete 20 hours of professional learning in one of three designated areas of study (human growth and development; substance abuse and dependency; and human and intercultural relations) as required in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.3 and 13.4. All three designated areas of study must be completed by the end of the first three years of employment.

Q: Will the 2013-14 school Professional Development Plan be submitted to the district office?

A: As in the past, school Professional Development Plans will continue to be submitted to the district office for incorporation into the district plans. The superintendent or his/her designee will review all school-level plans, or plan summaries, and include a narrative on school-level professional learning needs in the district Professional Development Plan.

Q: Will the 2013-14 district Professional Development Plan be submitted to the Department?

A: District Professional Development Plans are no longer submitted to the Department for review. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the superintendent will oversee the development and implementation of the district plan and the local board of education will review the plan for fiscal impact. The district’s Professional Development Plan will be retained on file in the district and can be used as documentation for the district’s Quality Single Accountability Continuum review.

Plan Development and Support

Q: Will the Department provide templates for districts to use in developing their 2014-15 plans?

A: The Department is developing *optional* plan templates to assist educators in planning professional development for 2014-15 that meets the new regulatory requirements. These plan templates are **not** mandated. Rather, districts may elect to use or modify any of the templates provided by the Department or they may create their own templates. The following plan templates will be posted online, as they are developed:

- Individual teacher Professional Development Plan (PDP) and Corrective Action Plan (CAP)
- Individual principal Professional Development Plan
- Superintendent Professional Development Plan



- School Professional Development Plan
- District Professional Development Plan

Please visit www.nj.gov/education/profdev often to access the new guidance and planning tools as they become available.

Q: May superintendents maintain the Local Professional Development Committee to assist in developing the district Professional Development Plan?

A: The superintendent is responsible for the development of the district Professional Development Plan and may designate staff and create or keep existing structures for managing the district planning process. For example, the superintendent may (a) maintain the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC); (b) re-purpose the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC); or (c) create new structures to oversee professional development. Note: election of LPDC members is no longer required.

Q: May principals increase the number of members on the School Improvement Panel?

A: At the principal's discretion, the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) may be expanded or other staffing structures may be used to support the ScIP in fulfilling its responsibilities – as long as teachers comprise at least one-third of the total membership. For example, principals may (a) maintain the existing school professional development committee (SPDC) to support the work of the ScIP; (b) maintain the SPDC and appoint qualified members to serve on the ScIP; or (c) use ScIP in place of the former SPDC. Note: election of SPDC members is no longer required.

Allocation of PD Hours

Q: Has the requirement for 100 professional development hours over 5 years changed?

A: The former 5-year cycle of 100 hours of professional learning for teachers has been changed. Beginning July 1, 2013 teachers must earn *at least* 20 hours of professional development each year, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.4. The 20 hours will be prorated in a given year depending on individual circumstances. For example, a teacher who works 50% of the day/week must earn 50% of the required 20 hours, or 10 hours; a teacher who is out for an entire year is not required to earn any hours during the time away. Guidance on developing the individual teacher Professional Development Plan is available at www.nj.gov/education/profdev.

Q: When will teachers begin counting hours for the 2013-14 school year in accordance with the annual requirement of a minimum of 20 professional development hours?

A: The 5-year 100-hour cycle has been eliminated. Beginning July 1, 2013, teachers must complete a *minimum* of 20 professional development hours per year. The annual professional development cycle will extend from July 1 through June 30 each year.

Q: Since teachers are now required to earn at least 20 hours of professional development per year, what happens to hours a teacher has already earned as part of the former 100-hour, 5-year cycle?

A: The former 5-year, 100-hour cycle has been eliminated (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.4). Beginning July 1, 2013, teachers are required to earn a minimum of 20 hours annually. Even if a teacher has already accumulated 100 PD hours in advance of the end of the previous 5-year cycle, that teacher is expected to complete 20 hours of professional development during the 2013-14 year and in subsequent years. However, during this transition year, teachers having a multi-year professional learning goal (such as completing a college course of study) should work with their supervisors to determine how the multi-year plan will be transitioned to a year-to-year plan.



Q: How will districts determine the number of hours required for teachers working part-time or who are on leave for part of the school year?

A: A part-time teacher is defined as one who is employed on a regular basis for the school year, but for less than the full school day or week. The supervisor must prorate the hours required for a teacher working part-time or on leave for part of the school year. The hourly requirement is prorated depending on individual circumstances. For example, a teacher who works 30% of the day/week must earn 30% of the required 20 hours. A teacher who works half the year must accrue 10 hours, and a teacher who is out for an entire year is not required to earn any hours for the time away. The principal should work with the teacher to develop a plan that is reasonable for the individual's circumstances.

Q: How many PD hours are awarded for completion of a college course?

A: The number of hours for undergraduate or graduate courses is calculated by seat time. Hence, a teacher will typically earn 45 professional development hours (15 weeks x 3 hours per week) for completion of a 3-credit course.

Q: How many PD hours should be awarded to a cooperating teacher who works with a student teacher?

A: The school and district administration may exercise discretion in determining the number of hours awarded to a cooperating teacher who is working with a student teacher. The Department will not issue a state-wide policy in this matter because we believe districts need to consider their local contexts in making this decision.

Q: May districts count training in the teacher evaluation instrument as part of a teacher's 20-hour professional development plan (PDP)?

A: As a regulatory requirement, training in the evaluation instrument would be included in the 20 hours of teacher professional development; however, the 20 hours is only a *minimum*. It is important to ensure that all the other requirements for the individual teacher PDP are addressed as well. Please note that each teacher's improvement and/or growth needs, as identified through the evaluation process, must be addressed through the teacher's individual professional development plan (PDP) pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.4(c). All professional learning opportunities must be aligned with the NJ Standards for Professional Learning and the definition of professional learning located at <http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/pddef.pdf>.

Q: May teachers receive PD hours delivered online as part of the annual, minimum 20-hour requirement for professional learning activities (e.g, training, college courses)?

A: Online professional learning may be included in the annual, minimum 20-hour requirement for educator professional development if approved by the educator's supervisor. It is the responsibility of providers to document an individual's completion of professional learning for administrators who approve professional development activities. A sample PD certificate, located at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/pd/teacher/pdcert.shtml>, reflects the *information* that must be documented for each participant, even if a provider uses an alternative documentation format.

Q: Is the professional development requirement for ethics, law, and governance still in effect?

A: All PD plans for active school leaders serving on a permanent or interim basis whose positions require possession of the CSA, principal or supervisor endorsement must continue to complete appropriate training on school law, ethics and governance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-8.2 and other statutory requirements related to student safety and well-being. Whereas in the past, the regulations were very specific about the details of the training, the revised regulations stipulate that the specific training needs



of each school leader will be reviewed annually and determined individually as part of PDP development.

For More Information

- View professional standards, guidance materials, PDP and CAP plan templates and tools at www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs.
- Access AchieveNJ resources on professional development and support at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/comm.shtml>.
- To share questions or comments, please email TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us.